

filed 20 November 1997. The entirety of each of those applications is incorporated herein by reference.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION - -

Delete the first paragraph, at page 1, lines 3-8, and insert therefor the following:

--The present invention relates to a process and a plant for the treatment of vulcanized rubber of all kinds, such as tyres, conveyor belts, boots, shoes and other objects containing assembled rubber and polymer materials for the purpose of recycling the components by the relevant industries.--

Delete the fourth paragraph at page 2, lines 25-32, and insert therefor the following:

--GB 2,026,144 (1979) discloses a plant for the treatment of rubber waste and of synthetic materials coming from worn tyres. Thermal decomposition of the product, which is coarsely reduced, is carried out in a fluidized bed of sand at 800°C in the presence of oxygen. The gases produced by the decomposition are used and, at the end of the process, the reinforcing metals are recovered by means of magnets.--

Page 3, between lines 18 and 19, insert the following section heading:

--SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION--

Delete the first full paragraph, at page 4, lines 5-9, and insert therefor the following:

--B) The reduced waste is introduced into a reactor and treated for 30 minutes at 350°C with an OH⁻ ion generator, preferably a strong alkaline base such as molten NaOH. 3. Separation of the basic liquid and the residues coming from the treated rubber.--

Page 4, between lines 32 and 33, insert the following section heading:

- - BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS - -

outside, between the insulation, by heating coils conveying a warm liquid) keeps the temperature constant inside the tank.

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The liquid is sent via the line 12, fitted with a pump, into the reactor 13 and the waste, cut up in the cropper 14, advantageously a guillotine, is sent by the chain conveyor 15 into the reactor 13, the solid materials must be immersed, the amount of caustic liquid is attained by the operation and control of a probe which also actuates the closure of the valve 17 and the start of the stirring provided by the mixer 16. The temperature of the reactor is maintained by the heating system 18. After approximately 30 minutes treatment at 350°C, the materials are deconsolidated, the caustic liquid is extracted by the line 19, fitted with a pump, through a filter 21, to the buffer tank 20. The filter 21 retains the particles greater than 1 mm. It is unclogged suddenly by closing the valve of the line 19 and sending compressed air 44 into that part of the line 19 which is connected to the tank 13.--.

Delete the third paragraph, at page 8, line 15 - page 9, line 4, and insert therefor the following:

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--As this is a heat treatment, it is preferable to work continuously as long as possible. For this purpose, and in order to avoid shut downs due to the build-up of impurities and small particles, cleaning devices are provided for removing them, without having to stop the production. After a number of treatments and in anticipation of cleaning the buffer tank 20, the NaOH liquid in the master tank 5 will be taken to the minimum level in order to receive the entire solution stored in the buffer tank 20, up to the level of the tap on the line 21. Next, water will be slowly added via the line 37 to the rest of NaOH liquid, bottom of the buffer tank 20 for a direct dilution to the point of non-crystallization (concentration +/- 40%). After this dilution, the valve 38 is opened on a vibrating screen 39 having a porosity of 10